

Harold Plunk Haggerty

How Harold Cliveden, the Human Shadow, Pitched the Russetvilles to Victory and Won Pennant

By George William Daley

"If there's anything I don't like to hear it's these hard luck baseball stories. Wherever you go there's an army of guys to tell you how they had the game won only for a big dub on the other team who made a home run in the last half of the ninth; or how their own heavy hitter struck out with the bases full when there were only two runs behind; or how their pitcher held the other side down to no hits and no runs for eight innings and then fell in a fit in the last; or over this wide land, wherever the great national game is played, you'll hear these tales, and I've heard 'em so often that they make me tired."

"I once heard the baseball reporter of a Missouri paper tell a story that he said took the cake for pure hard luck over anything he ever saw. It was about a game in which the score was 1 to 1 in the ninth, when a heavy hitter belted the ball so hard it broke in two. Half of it fell in front of the home plate and the other half went over the fence. The umpire decided that he was entitled to half a run, and he gave the game to the slugger's side, one and a half to one."

"Of course you don't have to believe everything these guys who write baseball for the papers say. I don't. The story that followed was an old one, but there probably was some truth in it. There may have been a ball game."

"But the first year I played with the Alifafas in the Comdromper's League, before Josh Haggerty came to manage us and get together the strong aggregation that captured the pennant three times hand-running, I ran up against a proposition that made me hark back to that Missouri reporter's yarn. There's more than a tinge of hard luck in it, and it's all true—Pinch Hobbs was a young pitcher just breaking in by the name of Harold Cliveden. He was tall, yellow-haired and very slender when he first signed, but after a month or two of hard work he got thinner. Then he fell in love with a Russetville girl and she didn't love him back, and the pining and sighing he did for her made him fairly shrink up with thinness. Then he went off his feed entirely from lovesickness and got ghostly. He was so thin that when he got to the mound he could see half of second base on each side of him in the background. When he raised his hand to throw you'd see his hand and the ball, but no arm connecting them to his body; his extremities were so like pipe stems. He really should have been on exhibition. But he could pitch good ball for all his thinness, and so the Russetvilles wouldn't hear of his quitting."

"Well, Harold got toned down so they took to calling him 'Shadow' and 'Silver,' and the Russetville management bought a case of cod liver oil and a lot of these patent sawdust foods to bring him back to his natural weight. They were afraid he'd be in this air if he got any thinner, and it would have been hard to imagine him any more invisible without losing sight of him entirely. Harold would have welcomed melting away with a warm heart, he was so doggone morose at the unrequited love that he placed at his lady love's feet. It was whispered around that he tried to commit suicide and shot at himself and missed with all six chambers of a .44-caliber revolver. Any man that could have hit him would have had a crack shot, so I don't doubt the story."

"Now, the reason Harold couldn't win his girl's heart was because Reggie Van Haggerty, who was a pitcher and a Harvard pitcher, had made a clean steal of it the season before, and she hadn't forgot him. Why Reggie had printed on the team the name of his 'second' never could find out. He was no second-hand guy, or second-rate pitcher, and he never played second base in his life. He liked Dottie Watkins most as much as she liked him; in fact, I guess the only thing that kept 'em from gettin' hitched up long before Harold came along was because Reggie pitched for the Alifafas and Dottie was a roofer for Russetville to win the pennant."

"Yes, she was a roofer. I never knowed a girl like her, she could tell a three-bagger from the right field foul flag, but she could. It was a liberal education to sit near where she was, and she had her eyes sparkling and her gloves bulged from applauding, and her voice mumbled a little hoarse from hollerin' at good plays, and her cheer own name 'an' Josh the other guys."

"Git away off there, Jim," she'd yell to one of the Russetvilles that had just took first on four balls, say. I knew that pitcher couldn't put over. You ain't tied to that bag. Get away off. Get up on your toes—Sam'll sting it in a minute. Never mind, Sammy, it only takes one to hit it. All together now, give that shortstop the spikes if he gets on the base line—don't hit so slow, Sam—that one was by before you swung. There's a straight one—lam-baste it! Wow!"

"And then she'd get up an' wave her hands beckonin' to Jim to come home, an' hollerin' to Sam to go an' take second on the throw, an' the 'opposin' feller's dig so rattled at the idea of a woman knowin' how the game is played, that they'd make errors and wild throws tryin' to watch her squintin' eyes instead of the ball."

"Dottie was wrapped up in the Russetvilles, not because she was stuck on any member of the team, but because she lived in Russetville and was loyal to it. For that reason she admired Harold because he was a good pitcher, an' she'd get on the front row in the grandstand the days he pitched an' implore him to strike out the opposing feller, an' call him 'Harry boy' when he fanned a good hitter, but that was as far as it went. When the game was over and Harold mebbe walked home with her an' tried to say good-bye to her in a way becomin' an admirer, she'd back off from the plate an' say, 'Surr-r-r! Don't try none o' your out-curves on me!' an' otherwise subdue him. But when Reggie was in town with the Alifafas, if he did beat the home team, they'd walk home, an' Reggie could make triple plays on her blushing cheeks, an' she'd lay her head on his shoulder an' say, 'If you're only pitched for Russetville, an' throw a long-distance look at him.'"

"The hull thing to it was that Dottie was waverin' between love an' duty, she wanted the home team to win the pennant, and yet she liked Reggie. If there hadn't been no Russetville nine she'd prob'ly be married Reg; an' if there hadn't been no Alifafas, an' Reggie was back in Harvard, never havin' been druv to the west an' ball playin' for pourin' carnisene on a professor's whiskers and lightin' 'em, she'd prob'ly be married Harold, so there you are. Again, if she'd lived in Alifafas an' seen me play every day, Reggie couldn't have been one, so I for 1 had the town crazy, from 2-year-old to grandfathers."

"Well, it come down to the series that decided the resting place of the pennant, and it was between Alifafas and Russetville. We won Thursday's game with Dan Delaney in the box, lost Friday's with Lamp Hynes pitched, and needed Saturday's with Reggie Van Haggerty and Harold Cliveden as the opposin' pitchers."

"Harold was still as thin as ever; yes, maybe thinner. He got his time during the summer that Dottie

didn't like him because he was so awfully slim, an' he'd started in on cod liver oil an' the fattening grub then in dead earnest, but he was so anxious and worried so much it made no difference. He kept just as thin, an' pretty soon he begun to get thinner and pine away worse than ever, just because he couldn't get fat."

"About this time I learned that the bar to his happiness was Reggie, an' he hopped with joy when he learned Reg was goin' to pitch against him in the deciding game. Right away he came to Reggie with the proposition:

"Now, you know as well as I do that I won't marry you while I pitch for the Russetvilles, an' that she won't marry me while there's a chance o' your landin' here. Now, if you win this afternoon, I'll jump the Russetvilles, leave town, and you can have my place. If I win I want you to quit comin' around here an' give me a clear field. Is it a go?"

"Reggie knew the ground lay just that way, an' he was met as anxious as Harold to get the girl. So he agreed, an' they shook hands on it. The Russetvilles had an advantage in playing on their own grounds, but the Alifafas had me, an' that made it about even. We all went into the game determined to do or die, for each nine thought a lot of its winning pitcher. When the thing was noised around town there was more excitement and a bigger crowd than I'd ever seen in Russetville."

"Reggie's specialty that day was striking men out, an' he had the Russetvilles on their ears, while Harold sent up record after record. Reggie turned into high flier as soon as you touched 'em. Dottie sat in the grandstand all unknown what was goin' on, and roared for Russetville and cast languishing glances at Reggie. She wanted him to lose, and there he was sweatin' his shirt off to win her."

"Well, in the seventh innin' I belted one over the fence for the first score and the crowd groaned and Reggie's face looked like a barrel o' butter. In their half of the eighth, though, they came in with a bang, and Reggie's vicious drives, the last a two-bagger, an' two runs crossed the plate. We came in for our half of the ninth determined to win or tie right there."

Keen Work Caught Desperado

DETECTIVE MADE UP AS A HOBO AND LANDED HIS MAN

(Chicago Inter-Ocean.)

ALL THE western desperadoes are not rounded up in canyons or swamps by innhoming posers. An irrigation engineer from Arizona says:

"As many of them have been got by strategy as by the herding process. The pattern job of that kind that I know anything about happened when Mort Loudon, a keeper at the San Quentin prison, in California, cornered Jim Crandall, a prospector, who escaped from the Poisons penitentiary, in the same state, in 1891, after blinding one keeper and killing another. Loudon played a long hand at that job."

"He used a trick that fifty men with guns could probably never have got away with. Loudon was a young fellow of 30, quiet to the point of taciturnity. He was a former prospector, and a hunter, and he was the last man who would ever have been sent out from San Quentin to undertake a job requiring nerve, strategy and quick shooting in a hobo."

"While Loudon was on a visit to the keepers at Poisons the tip reached the Poisons pen that Jim Crandall was down at Mojave, in Kern county, California, surrounded by friends, and waiting for a chance to make a break down the line for the Santa Anita mountains. Loudon begged for and got a chance to bring him in."

"Three mornings later, when the Santa Anita foreman, from San Francisco, pulled alongside the Mojave station shack, the conductor and brakeman jumped off the train, ran forward to the blind baggage, and, with a great shout, 'Grab him!' and 'Grab him!' a hobo who was riding on the blind baggage platform. The bum, who was Loudon, seemed to be very drunk, and he made no resistance."

"The two dozen and odd loungers around the Mojave station looked on at the ditching of the Lobo with amused interest. They were all friends of Crandall, and they were at the station to inspect the men who might attempt to leave the train. Mojave wasn't a place much visited by strangers, but Crandall's friends, who were waiting for a chance to make a break off there until they were enabled to hike Crandall down the line to the Santa Anita mountains. But they didn't mind the bum."

"When the train pulled out, the station crowd dispersed, and Loudon, in his hobo make-up, staggered around to the shady side of the station to sleep off on the boards his cleverly simulated drunk. He was in the same settlement with the train, and he was able to judge from a glance at the actions of the crowd of men at the station, and he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had been allowed to drop off at Mojave had he not framed up that blind baggage riding hobo dodge."

"Loudon was still pretending to stagger drunkenly, stretched out close to the shaded wall of the station, when somebody came along and passed him a few fifty kicks. It was the manager of the Harvey eating house who did the kicking."

"Well, you're ditched plumb, Jack," said the eating house manager when Loudon sat up and rubbed his eyes, and there ain't a chance in the world for you to nudge out of here without their comin' to carry you to Barstow or to Los Angeles, anyhow. You got to hustle your way out. Want a sweepin' job, for \$3 a week and your booze and eatin'?"

"Loudon didn't grab at the offer with enough eagerness to give himself away in his hobo's capacity, but he accepted the job after a moment's consideration. The offer was, in fact, a godsend for him, for while lying in the shadow of the wall he had been trying to figure out how he was going to hang around the camp long enough to accomplish his purpose, or at least make a try at accomplishing it, without generating suspicion. The sweep-up job at the eating house would let him out at night."

"Loudon chafed around the Harvey eating house for three days before he got a view of Crandall. On the third night of his employment he pretended to be very drunk at the wind-up of his day's work and staggered over from the eating house to the main and only street of Mojave, made up mostly of groggies."

Loudon simulated a funny jag, and the gang in the ginmill proceeded to

"Dan Delaney opened by flyin' out. He meant to put it out of the lot, but put it too high. Then Jimmy Harrison was hit by a pitched ball an' stole second. Johnny Harrison struck out. With two out, his prize in his grasp Harold went up an' passed Pete Brown on four balls, an' hit Pinch in the ribs flin' the bags. It was up to them, Harold, to win on bases, two out, the crowd in suspense, an' Reggie whoopin' it up on the coachin' line to rattle his rival, an' Dottie whoopin' in the grandstand to rattle me. What a chance! As I trotted out with the old lead-ended bat I'd a bet a million it was Harold for the railroad ties that win."

"Well, I watched Harold tie himself up an' I lammed the first ball pitched. Zip! It went back like a shot, a liner even with your knees, but a safe an' good one for me, maybe three, with Pinch on first base."

"But then somethin' happened. Harold saw the ball comin', jumped in front of it an' tried to stop it. He might as well a-grasped for the moon. uBt he put a lank, long leg in front of it, an' the next minute there was a second like a lawn mower an' half the crowd in the grandstand was on its feet. The third baseman caught his half an' touched Jimmy, an' though the first baseman muffed his, he picked it up an' touched me before I got to the base."

"Imagine the excitement. There was that ball, cut in two clean as a whistle, Harold hopping around gaily in his excitement, Reggie storming an' hollerin' at the umpire, an' the audience, includin' Dottie, gone mad with joy. Josh Haggerty rushed out to make the claim that neither Jimmy nor I was out, for we hadn't been touched with the whole ball."

"Exactly," said the umpire. 'But I rule this way. Your man on third wasn't put out. The third baseman caught Haggerty half out, though, and the first baseman touched him, the other half out. Consequently that makes three out, and the Russetvilles win.'"

"And that settled it. That's my prize hard-luck story. Harold made me out Dottie, after she'd pined for weeks waitin' for Reggie to come an' win her; for he kept his part of the contract an' never showed up in Russetville again."

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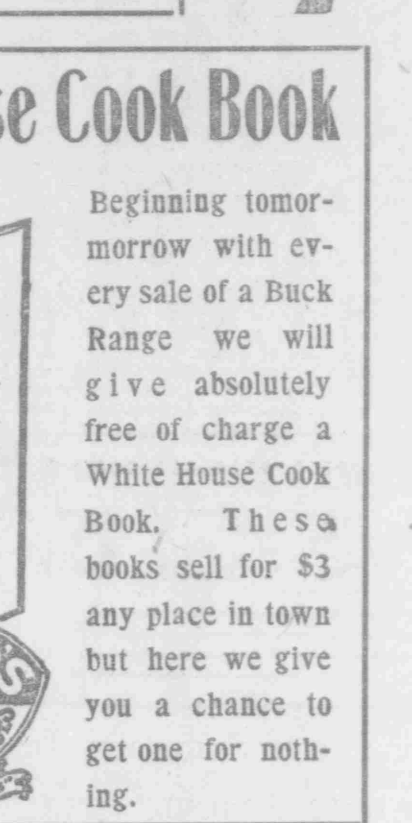
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